



STAFF REPORT

Town of Wellesley - Planning Department

Application: DR-2018-61 – 22 Colburn Road - Preservation Determination
Subject Property: 22 Colburn Road (Assessor's Parcel ID # 73-30)
Applicant: James Mealey
Property Owner: James Mealey
Date: Report prepared 12/26/2018 for 1/14/2019 Historical
Commission Meeting
Staff Contact: Claudia Zarazua, Planner
Staff Recommendation: **Not Preferably Preserved**

APPLICATION OVERVIEW

On December 17, 2018, the Applicant submitted an application for Eligibility Notice and Preservation Determination along with plans of proposed work that includes partial demolition and addition at 22 Colburn Road. Planning Department Staff determined that the proposed work would affect more than 50% of the total existing exterior surface of the dwelling (55%), therefore qualifying as a Demolition under the Bylaw. An Eligibility Notice was issued on December 18, 2018 determining the subject building to be an Eligible Building. A public hearing before the Historical Commission is scheduled for January 14, 2019.

DESCRIPTION

In consideration of the application for Eligibility Notice, it was determined that the dwelling was originally constructed no later than 1914 when a property at Colburn Road was first reported under the ownership of Seldon L. Brown.

Seldon L. Brown was a WWI veteran, one of the founders of the Wellesley Club, served as principal of the Wellesley High School (renamed after him in 1924) for more than 30 years, and was an active member of the Library Board of Trustees. Mr. Brown acquired a parcel of land from Ellen W. Fiske in 1912. (See Figure 1). After the passing of Mr. Brown in 1934, Mrs. Nellie Brown inherited the property. In 1939, Mrs. Brown sold the property to Richard and Esther Swain. The property was later sold to Patricia and Peter Howard-Johnson in 1962. Mr. Howard-Johnson was an architect for the firm C E Maguire Inc., presently known as CDR Maguire Corporation. Mrs. Howard-Johnson worked for the Institute of Certified Travel Agents. In 2015, the property was sold to the current owners James and Andrea Mealey.

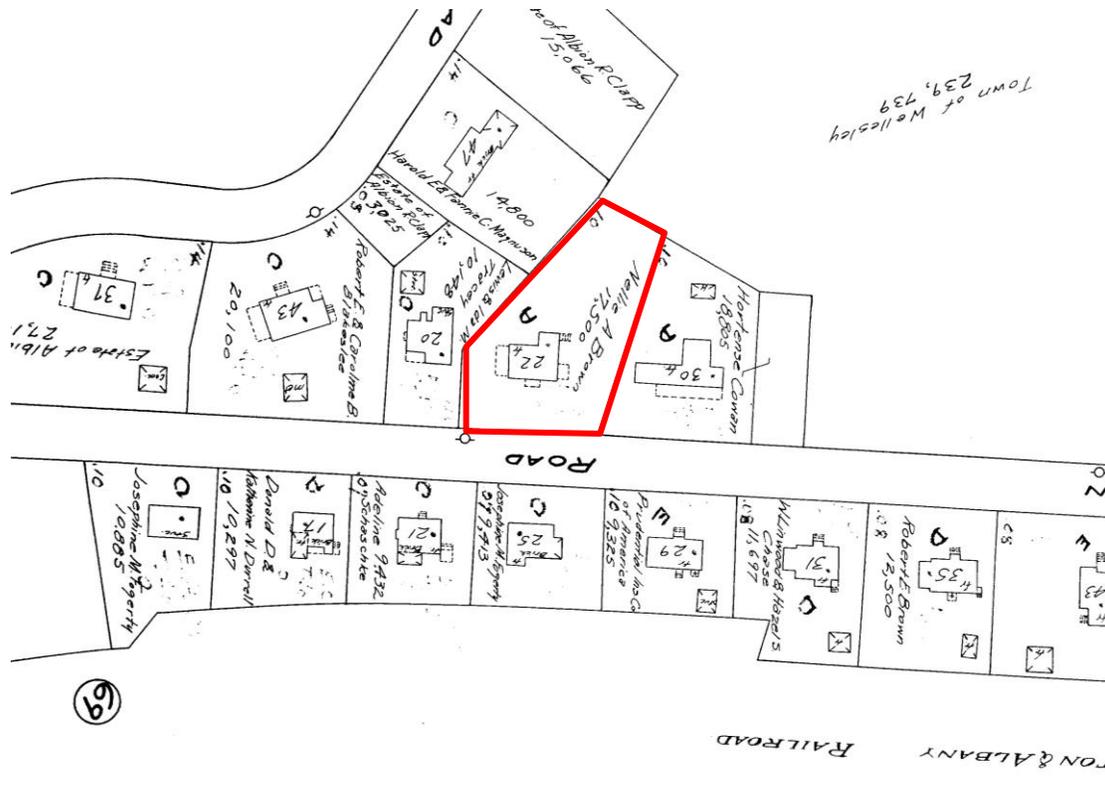


Figure 1. Colburn Road, 1935, Town Atlas of 1935

The dwelling is a two-story building with side-gabled roof, not significantly altered since its construction. Staff believes the architecture of the house is best characterized as Colonial Revival with elements representative of such style like small-paned windows and heavy window frames, as well as an accentuated front entrance. The siding is perceived to be wood cladding and has a concrete foundation.

According to the Assessor's record, the overall condition of the existing house is average. The first building permit associated to this address was for the addition of a dormer in 1925. In 1956, a building permit was filed for a window replacement and renovation of pantry into a breakfast room. A building permit was filed for a rear addition to the existing detached garage in 1958.

The house sits on a non-conforming lot and the proposed addition has received a special permit by the Zoning Board of Appeals. The driveway is located on and accessed by Colburn Road.

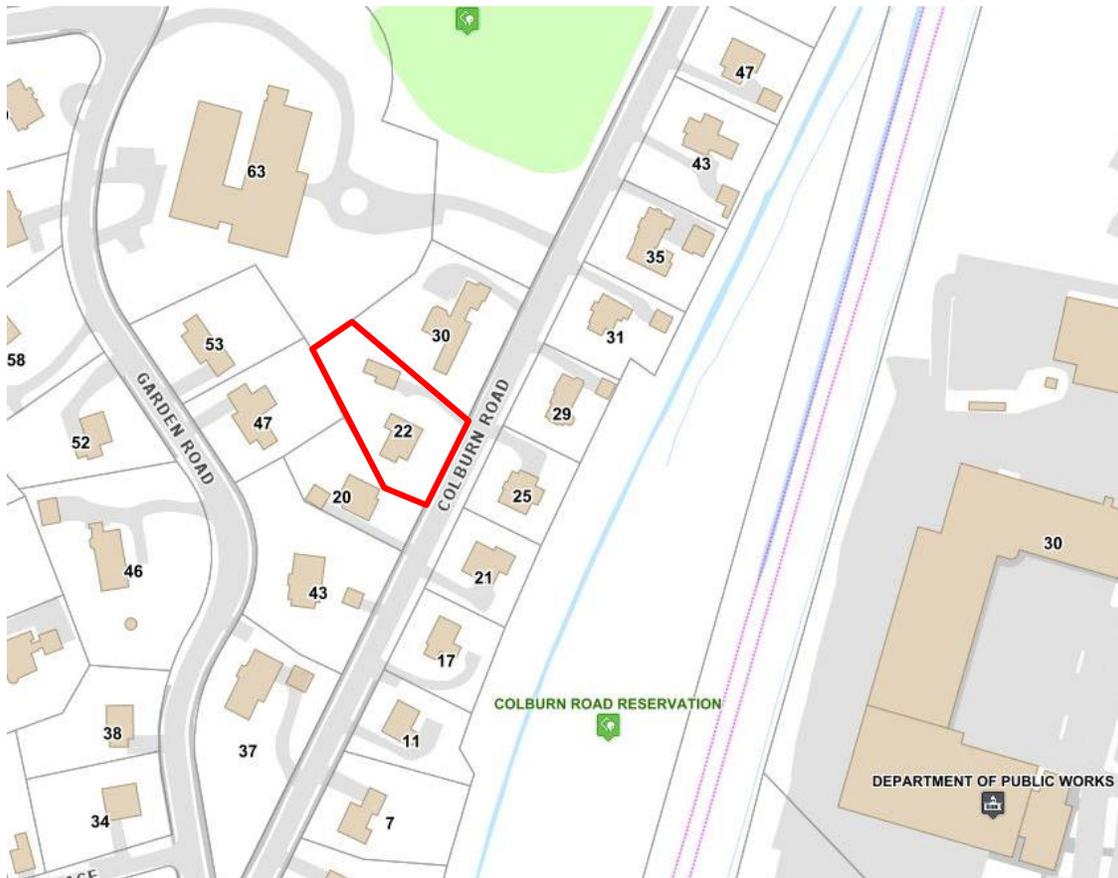


Figure 2. Neighborhood Context

As a partial Demolition, the Applicant has submitted architectural drawings to preserve the original building, build a two-story rear addition to expand the kitchen and family room on the first floor and a new master bedroom on the second floor, build a new three-car garage, and a two-story addition on the left side of the existing house.

PRESERVATION DETERMINATION STANDARDS

In consideration of a Preservation Determination for the building, the Historical Commission is to determine whether or not the building should be Preferably Preserved, a term defined as a building “the demolition of which that is proposed...would be detrimental to the historical or architectural heritage of the Town because such Building is (i) importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the Town, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or the United States of America, (ii) historically or architecturally important by reason of period, style, method of building construction or association with a particular architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of Buildings, or (iii) located within one hundred fifty (150) feet of the boundary line of any federal or local historic district and contextually similar to the Buildings located in the adjacent federal or local historic district.”

If the Commission determines that the Building should be Preferably Preserved, then no Demolition Permit with respect to such Building shall be issued until twelve (12) months after the date of the Preservation Determination.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff is of the opinion that the subject building **is** (i) associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the Town, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or the United States of America, and (ii) historically or architecturally important by reason of period, style, method of building construction or association with a particular architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of Buildings, **and is not** (iii) located within one hundred fifty (150) feet of the boundary line of any federal or local historic district and contextually similar to the Buildings located in the adjacent federal or local historic district.

With respect to standard (i), Staff is of the opinion that the contributions of Seldon L. Brown to the school system is notable in terms of his contributions to the history of the Town and school system. However, based upon the scope of the proposed work, Staff is of the opinion that the partial demolition would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the Town.

With respect to standard (ii), Staff is of the opinion that the existing dwelling is architecturally important because of period and style, by itself and in the context of the neighborhood. Its proximity to the Brown High School and Brown Park are also important to the history of the school system.

Therefore, based upon the above, **Staff recommends that the building not be deemed Preferably Preserved based on the scope of work identified in the submitted plans.** Staff recommends that action by the Historical Commission concluding the same be based on the submitted plans, therefore requiring any alterations to the scope similarly affecting 50% or more of the existing exterior of the dwelling to be reviewed as a new application prior to the issuance of permits from the Building Department.